

THE HORSELESS AGE.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO MOTOR INTERESTS.

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THE HORSELESS AGE.

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The Race Track.

The race for motor carriages which came off Sept. 7, 8 and 11, at Narragansett Park, Providence, R. I., while in some respects disappointing, was on the whole a valuable lesson to the promoters of the new industry.

It was disappointing in that the plans of the Fair managers for the accommodation of the vehicles and the thousands who came to see them were not up to the standard of such a first-class attraction. No suitable building was set apart for an exhibition, no signs told the stranger where the carriages were to be seen, and as the electric vehicles were half a mile away from the gasoline wagons, much discomfort was experienced by visitors, particularly

during the two stormy days, when the sheds were almost inaccessible. That so many braved the hostile elements and the quagmires underfoot, to get a glimpse of the carriages that run without horses, speaks well for the new vehicle, if not for the management of the Rhode Island Fair.

Another cause for disappointment is found in the fact that only three heats were run instead of five, as originally intended. The weather was the ostensible reason assigned for this premature ending of the motor race, and indeed this would be sufficient cause for the loss of one heat, but it does seem that a race might have been run on Saturday had the managers been so inclined. The chief contestants had determined to outdo their previous performances, and the track was in condition for fast time. Startling figures would surely have been recorded in this final effort, and last, but not least, the amount paid out in prizes would have been somewhat larger.

It was rumored that the horsemen felt jealous of the amount of the purse offered in the motor carriage race, which was considerably larger than any purse they were contending for, and on this account the managers of the Fair preferred to allow the horses to monopolize the track on the last day. However this may be, it is absolutely certain that the Rhode Island State Fair Association secured a leading attraction at a very small outlay, so small, in fact, that had the contestants imagined any such outcome was possible, not one of them would have participated.

And here we come to another cause of embarrassment, namely, the vagueness which has characterized the rules and regulations governing motor races up to the present time. This oversight has already been mentioned in connection with the *Cosmopolitan* program, but the same, or even

greater, ambiguity clouds the meaning of the rules of the Providence race. It is safe to assume that not one of the entries knew that the rules of horse racing were to govern the event, nor were they familiar with those rules. Those with whom the editor conversed were not aware that separate entry was required for the exhibition, nor was the clause covering this point as explicit as it should be. These various misunderstandings naturally caused a good deal of dissatisfaction among the contestants, but there is apparently no way to prevent a recurrence so long as motor races are organized and conducted in this haphazard way. A representative organization, like the American Motor League, alone can correct these evils by adopting a reasonable code of rules to govern races and exhibitions, and lending its official sanction only to such enterprises as, in its judgment, will be truly beneficial to the industry.

One subject which will have to be taken up before another race is held, is whether contestants shall be allowed to make changes in their wagons between heats, and to what extent. For example, one of the electric carriages at Providence received an accession of battery every day, until in the last heat the cells were piled up between the seats, and some 60 cells in all were carried, whereas the other electric carriage had only its original supply of battery. This is surely a matter to be regulated, or we shall have stacks of batteries piled up like Ossa upon Pelion, and motor races will quickly sink to the ridiculous.

But notwithstanding the drawbacks above referred to this first appearance of motor carriages in contest upon a race track has been productive of much good. It has established beyond question that the great mass of the intelligent public are deeply interested in the new vehicles, and are eager to see them in operation. Thousands of well-to-do people attended the Rhode Island Fair with the sole object of seeing the motor-carriage race, and hundreds came a considerable distance who never before had entered the grounds.

If the public are willing to pay to see these novel races it follows necessarily that promoters will organize them for the profit to be derived, and inventors and manufacturers will compete in them for the advertisement they receive.

Whether the motor race will take a permanent place in public estimation is a debatable question, nor need it concern us greatly at the present time. As a matter of fact a skilled engineer, by means of any one of half a dozen motive agents, can con-

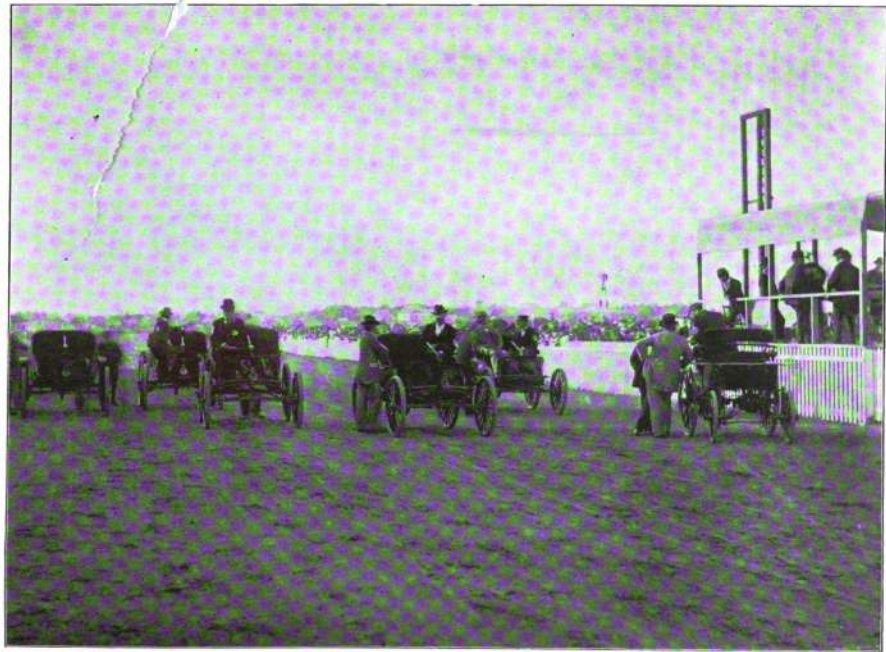
struct a racing wagon that will beat any record made by a horse, if the track is properly banked on the turns. But even when machines are built especially for racing (as those at Providence were not), and tracks of the most approved pitch are available, it is probable that the limit of speed will soon be reached. Any uncertainty in regard to the performance of a racing machine would then be chargeable to the wilful neglect of the operator or to some unavoidable accident. Unlike horse racing there would be little opportunity for jockeying. But for the present it is sufficient to know that the public is pleased to see a number of motor vehicles going at high speed around a race track. That an exhibition is a desirable accompaniment to a race has frequently been insisted on, and this feature should not be overlooked again. It is a needful corrective for the speed craze.

The chief lesson to be drawn from this Providence race, however, is the need of some representative body to decide the vexed points of general policy, carefully scrutinize all propositions for races and exhibitions, and see to it that motor interests are not sacrificed.

Wholesale Saddlers to Write Down the Bicycle and the Motor.

The Wholesale Saddlery Association, composed of the leading wholesale harness and saddlery dealers of the country, are considerably disturbed over the inroads the bicycle and the trolley car have already made in their trade, and see in the motor vehicle another innovation which bodes them no good. Accordingly they have solemnly resolved to combat the new methods of locomotion. At their last annual convention the president, in his address, alluded to the success which the bicycle manufacturers had had in utilizing the press of the land to create a universal demand for their machines, and suggested that the Saddlery Association should pursue a similar course. He said: "The Wholesale Saddlery Association should employ a man to counteract the articles that are sent broadcast about the decadence of the horse, one who would be capable of writing up something original about the horse, the live, moving thing, wherein every man and woman of taste delights, and a drive behind which sharpens the wits and lengthens life; to contrast this with the dead iron bicycle, that wrings the perspiration from every pore."

Continuing in this vein he endeavored to explain to his hearers how these shrewd bicycle manufac-



LINING UP FOR THE START AT NARRAGANSETT PARK, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

The Providence Race.

The motor carriage races advertised to take place Sept. 7th to 11th inclusive, at Narragansett Park, Providence, R. I., in connection with the annual Rhode Island State Fair, commenced on schedule time, but the programme was so seriously interfered with by two days of violent storm that only three out of the five heats proposed were run, the result being a victory for the electric carriages.

Out of the twelve original entries only eight materialized. These were the Duryea Motor Wagon Co., J. Frank Duryea, George Henry Hewitt, Fiske Warren, George H. Morrill, Jr., William M. Ashley & Son, Riker Electric Motor Co., and the Electric Carriage & Wagon Co. The last two were electric vehicles, the first being an entirely new one, and the second the "Electrobat," which received the gold medal at Chicago last fall. All the remaining wagons were of the Duryea model, one being entered by the Duryea company and the rest by private purchasers.

The electric carriages arrived several days before the opening of the fair, whereupon their owners began a search for charging facilities on the grounds. No provision for current having been made by the management, arrangements had to be made with a local electric light company, and the only place where the proper connections could be made was a cow shed some distance from the main entrance. Here the electric carriages took their stand, while the gasoline contingent occupied a number of stalls nearly half a mile away. The separation of the vehicles caused great inconvenience to the hundreds who came with the single object of seeing the motor carriages.

No space in any of the buildings had been fitted up for an exhibition and no exhibition of any kind was held, the management claiming that separate entry was required in order to qualify for the exhibition, and that the requisite number of entries had not been received. Consequently no prizes were distributed under this head.

On Monday, Sept. 7th, about 5.30 p. m., the carriages were called upon the track and numbers were assigned to them, as is customary in horse racing.

Each carriage being required to carry a weight of at least 165 pounds in addition to the driver all preferred to take this in the form of an extra passenger, who was either an employee or friend of the owner, or some well-known student of the subject.

The Riker carriage had the pole, the vehicle of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company secured next position, and the gasoline wagons filled out the row.

All the contestants were sent back some distance behind the post for the start and came up in good order. At the word the electric carriages shot ahead, followed by the entry of the Duryea Motor Wagon Company. The other Duryea wagons were road wagons not geared for high speed, and they fell back from the start. Throughout the five-mile dash the electric carriages gradually increased their lead, finishing close together, the Riker carriage first.

The first Duryea wagon was about three-quarters of a mile behind the winners.

A very strong wind was blowing, and the track, while fast for horses, was too rough and lumpy in parts for motor carriages. The time of the four leading vehicles for the first heat was as follows:

Riker Electric Motor Company.....	15 min. 1 sec.
Electric Carriage & Wagon Company..	15 min. 14 sec.
Duryea Motor Wagon Company.....	18 min. 47 sec.
William Ashley & Son	20 min. 59 sec.

As this was the first heat ever run on a track between motor vehicles it is reasonable to suppose that the contestants felt new and strange, and could not do themselves full justice. On the second day, however, they gained courage, and determined to improve on the time of the previous day. Both electric and gasoline wagons were carefully prepared for the second event. That of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company received an accession of batteries, and the cells of both the electric wagons were thoroughly saturated with the powerful fluid.

The Riker vehicle again took the pole on account of its victory in the first heat. The Electric Carriage & Wagon Company were given the second position, the Duryea Motor Wagon Company the third, William Ashley & Son the fourth and so on.

At the word the Riker vehicle took the lead as on the first day, maintaining it to the finish, closely followed by the Duryea wagon and the wagon of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company.

This heat was closely contested by the three leaders and evoked great enthusiasm from the spectators. The time was a considerable improvement over that of the preceding day:

Riker Electric Motor Company.....	13 m. 6 s.
Duryea Motor Wagon Company	13 m. 13 s.
Electric Carriage & Wagon Company.....	14 m. 33 s.
William Ashley & Son	16 m. 31 s.

On Wednesday and Thursday a violent northeasterly storm prevailed throughout that section of New England. Rain fell in torrents and the wind played havoc with the shows and with the plans of the management. All races were declared off on these two days, and hundreds of persons who had come from distant parts not touched by the equinoctial gale and could not remain for pleasanter weather, went back disappointed. During the continuance of the storm many showed their interest in the new vehicles by wading through mud and water to the sheds where they were quartered.

On Friday the weather cleared, and by afternoon the track was in good condition. The strong wind which had impeded the racers in the two previous heats had died away, and fast time was predicted. A vast assemblage, estimated at nearly 50,000, had collected in the grand stand and around the track by the time the motor race was called.

Riker took the pole in the third heat; Duryea, second position; the Electric Carriage & Wagon Co., third; Wm. Ashley & Son, fourth; and so on.

The electric carriages dashed off at a two-minute pace, closely followed by the Duryea wagon. A little beyond the half-mile the Duryea wagon was pulling up with the two electrics, when a tire punctured and the wagon gradually lost headway. The Riker carriage maintained its lead until the homestretch was reached, when the other electric spurted ahead and crossed the line a second ahead of its rival. Much better time was made by all the entries in this third heat, scarcely one falling below the 15-mile-an-hour limit. The time of the four winners was as follows:

Electric Carriage & Wagon Company.....11m. 27s.
 Riker Electric Motor Company.....11m. 28s.
 Duryea Motor Wagon Company.....11m. 59s.
 Wm. Ashley & Son.....15m. 47s.

The Riker carriage was conducted by A. L. Riker and C. H. Whiting; the carriage of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company by Henry B. Morris in the first two heats, and by Mr. Adams in the third.

The blood of the contestants was now up, and all were bent on smashing records on Saturday, the last day of the fair. It was announced that two heats might possibly be run, but owing to the large number of postponed horse races, which had to be run off, darkness closed on the track before the motors could be called, and the management announced that the three heats already run would constitute the race. There was considerable grumbling among the contestants, and some of the occupants of the grand stand, when this decision was made known, but no appeal could be made.

The Duryea wagons went overland to Worcester on the following day, and from there were shipped by train to Springfield. The wagons belonging to Fiske Warren and Geo. H. Morrill, Jr., were both run on their own wheels to the residences of their respective owners, the first to Harvard, Mass., and the second to Norwood, Mass.

One of the Duryea wagons made the run to Worcester in three hours, a distance of 47 miles by the road.

The electric wagons were shipped to their destinations as soon as possible.

The race was conducted by the association under the general rules applied to trotting races, and the awards were made upon this basis. The conditions called for a 25-mile race of five heats of five miles each, one on each of the five successive days of the fair.

As unfavorable weather prevented the completion of more than three heats three-fifths of the purse only was divided, in the following proportions: First money, to the Riker Electric Motor Co., of Brooklyn, N. Y., \$900; second, to the Electric Carriage & Wagon Co., Philadelphia, Pa., \$450; third, to the Duryea Motor Wagon Co., \$270; fourth, to Wm. Ashley & Son, Springfield, Mass., \$180.

According to the precedent in uncompleted track events two-fifths of their entrance fees were refunded to all contestants not disqualified by failure to attain the required average rate of speed.

Public interest in the motor races in Providence and vicinity was very keen, and quite a number of students of the new method of locomotion came from distant points to witness the trial of speed.

The management of the fair state that they feel amply repaid for their venture.

The electric carriages weighed from 2,200 to 2,500 pounds in racing trim, including passengers, the heavier of the two being that of the Electric Carriage & Wagon Company. The leading Duryea wagon weighed about 1,200 pounds all on.

The fastest mile was covered by the Riker electric carriage, the time being 2.13.

It was quite generally commented on by the audience that the electric vehicles made as much or more noise than the gasoline at high speed.

Prof. W. H. Pickering, of Harvard University, acted as Chairman of the Board of Judges, being assisted by Prof. Alonzo Williams, of Brown University; D. M. Thompson, president of the Corliss Steam Engine Company, Richards Howland, editor of the Providence *Journal*, and ex-Governor D. Russell Brown.

From the Chairman of the Judges.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Sept. 20, 1896.

Editor Horseless Age:

Now, that the Providence races are over, and we have had an opportunity to examine and weigh the results, I think we must conclude that some very valuable information has been obtained. Unlike the Chicago and New York competitions, this was a speed contest pure and simple. Only eight vehicles were entered for competition, and therefore, according to the published rules governing the races, no other points were considered by the judges. The comparison between the electric and gasoline carriages was particularly interesting, and the results were quite different from those obtained at Chicago. No electric carriages were entered in the New York contest. While at Chicago the electric carriages were badly beaten at Providence both of these entered came out with flying colors, distinctly in advance of the best gasoline vehicle.

The reasons for this difference are obvious. In Chicago the race lasted several hours, and the course lay over a rough and very difficult track. In Providence, on the other hand, the race lasted but a few minutes, and the course lay over a hard and perfectly level road. Both vehicles, doubtless, have been much improved since the Chicago race; but were it to be tried over again to-morrow we cannot doubt that the result would be the same.

Another point that seemed to me to be of interest was the comparatively low speeds that were at first obtained—low, that is, in comparison with what was claimed for the vehicle before the race, and the rapid improvement made in the successive heats. On the first day but four of the vehicles recorded a speed in excess of 15 miles an hour and none reached a speed of 20 miles, although as compared with common roads the course was an excellent one. Later, much better figures were scored, one of the electric carriages completing a mile in 2 m. 23 s., and one of the gasoline carriages accomplishing it in 2 m. 26 s. One of the electric carriages ran the whole five miles at an average speed of 25.2 miles per hour, while the gasoline carriage reached an average speed of 25.0 miles.

Much public interest was manifested in the races, especially upon the second day, when the competition was very close, and it appears certain that for racing as well as for practical purposes the motor vehicle has come to stay. That before long much higher speeds will be obtained upon the track, as soon as it becomes an object to construct vehicles especially for that purpose, also appears reasonably certain. In the mean time the motor vehicle has conclusively demonstrated that under favorable conditions an average speed of 15 miles an hour is perfectly practicable for ordinary purposes of pleasure travel.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF JUDGES AT THE PROVIDENCE RACE.

Entries.	Order. Sept. 7, 8, 11.			Time. Sept. 7, 8, 11.			Result.
				m. s.	m. s.	m. s.	
Riker Electric Motor Co.	1	1	2	15 01	13 06	11 28	1
Electric Carriage Wagon & Co.	2	3	1	15 13	13 33	11 27	2
Duryea Motor Wagon Co.	6	2	3	20 59	13 14	11 59	3
Wm. M. Ashley & Son.	3	5	4	18 47	16 31	15 47	4
Geo. Henry Hewitt.	4	4	5	19 31	16 12	15 49	5
Fiske Warren.	5	0	8	20 03		19 00	Disqualified
J. Frank Duryea.	7	6	7	21 23	17 52	18 07	6
Geo. H. Morrill, Jr.	0	7	6		18 19	17 19	Disqualified

W. H. PICKERING.